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Trump's pick for CIA director has called for Snowden's execution

Gen. Michael Flynn will be key adviser, Sen. Jeff Sessions for attorney general.

JOE MULLIN - 11/18/2016, 12:05 PM



Enlarge / Representative Michael "Mike" Pompeo, during an interview in 2013. Pompeo won an election for the first time in 2010 following a career as an army officer, tax lawyer, aerospace entrepreneur, and Republican National Committee member. Photographer: Julia Schmalz/Bloomberg via Getty Images

President-elect Donald J. Trump **has made three key national security picks this morning**, tapping Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) as attorney general, Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-Kan.) as head of the Central Intelligence Agency, and retired Gen. Michael Flynn as his security adviser.

Pompeo, the 52-year-old conservative Congressman, is a surprise choice, but he agrees with Trump on key issues. Just yesterday he **tweeted his opposition** to the Iran nuclear deal, saying that he looked forward to "rolling back this disastrous deal with the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism."

Pompeo joined Congress in 2010, coming in as part of a wave of Republicans affiliated with the Tea Party movement. Before his political career, Pompeo worked as a lawyer and founded an aerospace company.

On the intelligence committee, Pompeo has taken a particularly hard-line stance on how to treat NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. After Snowden's allies began a campaign to get him pardoned, the entire House Select Committee on Intelligence wrote a letter to President Barack Obama urging against a pardon. The letter said Snowden was no whistleblower, but rather a "serial exaggerator and fabricator."

At that time, Pompeo issued his own press release, calling Snowden a "liar and a criminal," who deserves "prison rather than pardon."

In a C-SPAN interview earlier this year, Pompeo went further, stating:

He should be brought back from Russia and given due process, and I think that the proper outcome would be that he would be given a death sentence for having put friends of mine, friends of yours, in the military today, at enormous risk because of the information he stole and then released to foreign powers.

Snowden has said he only gave information to journalists. Pompeo's comments about Snowden begin around the 23-minute mark.

Pompeo "will be a brilliant and unrelenting leader for our intelligence community to ensure the safety of Americans and our allies," said President-elect Trump in today's statement.

Immigration-focused AG

Sen. Jeff Sessions has long been known as taking a hard line on the immigration issue, one of Trump's popular hot-button issues. His opposition was critical in stopping immigration reform efforts in both 2007 and 2013.

In 1986, Sessions was denied a federal judgeship because of accusations that he made racist remarks, including referring to an African-American lawyer as "boy." He also called both the ACLU and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People "un-American."

"He is a world-class legal mind and considered a truly great Attorney General and U.S. Attorney in the state of Alabama," said President-elect Trump in the nomination statement. "Jeff is greatly admired by legal scholars and virtually everyone who knows him."

Retired Lieutenant General Mike Flynn will be Trump's national security adviser, a position that doesn't require Senate approval. Flynn was close to Trump throughout the campaign and advised him on security issues. He was head of the Defense Intelligence Agency until 2014, when he was relieved of his duties. Flynn says he was fired because he spoke out vigorously about Islamic extremism, but others he worked with cited severe management problems.

The New York Times notes that Flynn would enter the White House with "significant baggage." The consulting firm after he left the military in 2014 "appeared to lobby for the Turkish government," and Flynn had a paid speaking position for Russia

Today, a Kremlin-funded TV network.

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JOE MULLIN

Joe has covered the intersection of law and technology, including the world's biggest copyright and patent battles, since 2007.

EMAIL joe.mullin@arstechnica.com // **TWITTER** [@joemullin](https://twitter.com/joemullin)

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